

Report on the consultation for school term and holiday dates for the academic year 2024 – 2025

1. Introduction

Local Authorities have a duty to set the school term dates for local authority maintained schools, such as community and voluntary controlled schools. Foundation, Trust, Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies are responsible for setting their own term dates. In practice, most of the schools in Norfolk use the same term dates.

Schools must be open to pupils for 190 days in an academic year and 195 days for teachers. Home to school transport will be provided on the days the school is open to pupils.

Norfolk County Council works with other local authorities nearby to set proposed dates for an academic year – this is known as the Eastern Region Model Calendar. We do this because we feel it is better to have a co-ordinated approach to setting school term dates to minimise the impact on families and school transport providers.

2. Consultation

Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation, using a survey on Citizenspace. It was published on the Council's website and sent to over 400 schools, via e-courier on 1st November 2022 and the consultation closed on 16th December 2022.

We consulted on the proposed Eastern Region Model term and holiday dates for 2024 -2025, as set out in Appendix A.

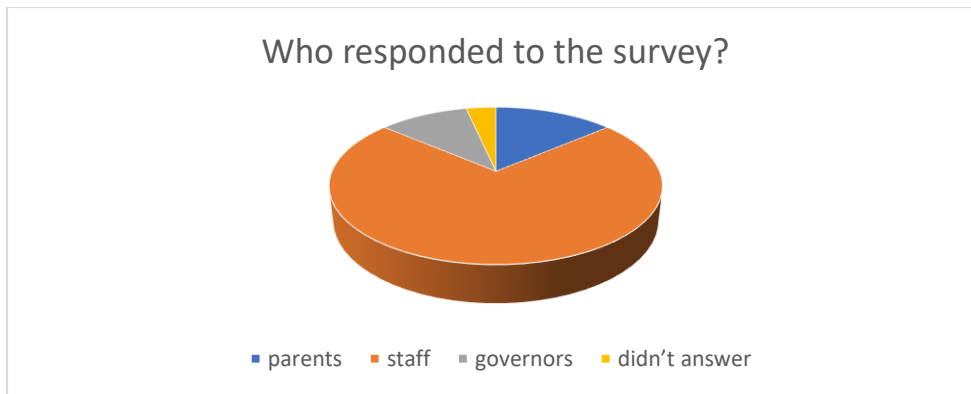
The proposed model includes 190 teaching days, when schools must be open to pupils and which home to school transport will be provided. The pattern of dates included five suggested in-service training dates for the academic year.

3. Analysis of consultation responses

The detailed consultation analysis can be found in Appendix B.

3.1 Reponses

26 responses were received. The majority of responses were from staff (81%), with a few from parents (14%) and governors (12%). One person did not answer the section to say which group they represented (4%). The last time we consulted on term dates we received 55 responses. Please note that respondents could tick all categories that applied to them.



3.2 Proposed school term dates for 2024/2025

6 respondents (23%) strongly agreed and 8 respondents (31%) agreed with the proposed school term dates.

The comments made in support of this proposal were;

- Dates work out well this year, nice spread of weeks, sensible INSET dates (7 responses)
- Whole weeks preferred (1 response)
- They match Suffolk, this helps as my child is at Norfolk school and I work at Suffolk school (1 response).

2 respondents (8%) neither agreed or disagreed.

7 respondents (26%) disagreed and 2 respondents (8%) strongly disagreed with the proposed school term dates. The comments made by those who did not support the proposal were;

- Not good for working parents to have longer at Oct half term, suggest move this date to 4 Sept, 23 April or 23 July (2 responses)
- Suggest Easter starts later on 14 April and finishes on 25 April, still gives schools 2 week break, but the extra 2 holiday dates could be used for 21/22 July. Challenging for students to attend part weeks; 3 days at Easter and 2 days in summer. (2 responses)
- With Easter so late, it makes first half of summer term very short – propose to move May half term to first week in June. Both these half terms are very different in length (1 response)
- Pointless have 2 days in July (1 response)
- Half term would be better week beginning 21 October, as in 2019. This would match Lincs and Cambs who propose a week earlier. (1 response)
(Please note; Cambs/Peterborough are consulting on 28 October 2024 for half term as per the Eastern Region Model).

3.4 Proposed staff training dates for 2023/2024

47% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed staff training dates.

23% neither agreed or disagreed.

22% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed staff training dates.

3.6 Schools linked to the respondents

14 respondents recorded the schools they were linked to. This included 10 primary phase schools, 2 secondary phase schools and 2 SEND schools.

3.7 Response to the views raised

As always there have been difficult decisions regarding some dates to ensure that 190 teaching days are available, around the public holidays. Nevertheless, the way the dates have fallen for 2024-25 has meant that we are able to propose full (rather than part) week breaks at both Christmas and Easter, which aligns closely with our neighbouring authorities.

The main areas of feedback during the consultation relate to the proposed INSET days and the 2 days in July.

It is suggested that we change the proposed INSET on October 25th. Fitting the 190 days in some years causes difficulties. To avoid the issue of one day into a new week at the end of the summer term, this day was included in October. Norfolk has used this approach over the past 15 years in setting term dates. Schools have the option of selecting school improvement dates from the dates suggested, or may choose to use twilight hours for staff training.

It is suggested to move the 6 January INSET to 23 July. Schools consistently say that they want school improvement days at the beginning of the term. There was an option to use Friday 3rd January as a school improvement day. However, staff would not have had 2 clear weeks, so this option was discounted. In addition, the 2nd half of the summer term is already over 7 weeks long and it was felt unhelpful to extend this any further, by adding an INSET day at the end of this term.

It is suggested to move the Easter holiday later, starting on 14 April. Our policy is to ensure that the return to school after Easter, leaves plenty of time before exams/SATs start. Plus we try to aim for even balanced weeks in a term, where we can. This proposal would shorten the first half of summer term to 4 weeks. The Eastern Region Group therefore discounted a later finish around Easter for this reason. In addition schools consistently ask for a staff training day at the beginning of term, which would also further reduce the length of this half of term.

4. **Recommendation**

The proposed Eastern Regional Model calendar for 2024/2025 is recommended for approval as;

- The majority of respondents agreed with the proposed term dates
- There is alignment with neighbouring council areas.

Please note, the local authority has a responsibility to publish the school term dates 18 months before the start date of the 2024/2025 school calendar.

Caroline Money, School Organisation Manager

January 2023

Appendix A –



Norfolk County Council

2024-2025

Norfolk Model Calendar
Consultation version

This calendar applies to community schools, community special schools, VC schools and nursery schools and sets the days on which school transport will be provided. While most Foundation, VA, foundation special, free schools and academy trusts who are able to set their own dates, adopt the Norfolk Model, we advise you to check with your child's school before making holiday or other commitments.

September 2024							October 2024							November 2024							December 2024						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30																					30	31					

January 2025							February 2025							March 2025							April 2025							
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	
			1	2	3	4	5						1	2						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					
														31														

May 2025							June 2025							July 2025							August 2025						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4							1		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
							30																				

Key : White dates - schools open to pupils
Yellow dates - pupil holiday
Red dates - bank holiday

Five staff training days will be selected from yellow dates, we suggest 2 & 3 September, 25 October, 6 January and 22 April. Some may choose to use twilight hours for staff training instead of some or all of these.

Local sports group	0	0	0	1	0	0
Local community group	0	0	0	0	0	0
Didn't answer	0	1	0	0	0	0
Comments on 2024/2025 term dates proposal by key themes – 22 respondents (85%)						
I like the shift in having more days off after the Xmas period and not coming back to school so abruptly in Jan.						
Whole weeks - a bit longer in October during what is always a long term. Time in the New Year after Christmas rather than too much before means children and staff come back rested.						
Dates work out well this year - public holidays work well with these dates.						
Nice spread of weeks in the term and sensible INSET dates, except maybe 22 April.						
They match with Suffolk term dates and I work in a Suffolk school while my child attends a Norfolk school, so it is nice to have time to spend holidays together please.						
Looks ok						
I would suggest moving the INSET day from 25th October to the beginning of a half term. Staff are more receptive to training at the beginning of a half term.						
The dates appear OK but wonder why the extra day in October as an INSET. That would be better in July added on before the end of the school year.						
They seem well spread out and give good opportunities for schools to plan CPD on pupil holidays throughout the year						
Sensible dates around public holidays						
Not good for working parents to have a longer October half term - remove the 25th October 2024 from the yellow dates so October half term is just one week. Few academies will have this date off school so causes lots of issues for parents who work in high school academies but their children are at NCC primaries Add the extra yellow date onto 4th September or 23rd April please						
To make the best use of INSET days, it is helpful to hold these at the beginning of term rather than at the end of a half term when everyone is tired and in need of a break. The September & January returns work well for INSET days whereas the tagging the extra day onto the beginning of the October half term rather than onto the end is a waste of a school improvement day.						
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I would suggest that the Easter Break Holidays start on the 14th April and finish on the 25th April. This still gives schools a two week break but releases two holiday dates to be placed at the end of the summer term on the 21st and the 22nd July. It is always challenging to get students to attend schools when there are short weeks. Currently you are proposing a 3 day week after Easter and a two day week at the end of the summer term. Attendance will be poor and there will be significant disruption to the delivery of the curriculum as a consequence. My proposal above avoids this problem						
The odd day 25th Oct would be better moved to July 25. Equally, moving 6th January to July would mean we can return earlier in January 25. The odd day 25th Oct would be better moved to July 25. Equally, moving 6th January to July would mean we can return earlier in January 25.						
Would prefer Easter holiday to start later and to continue for another day or two after Easter Monday.						
I do not agree with the end of the summer term going partly into a week. This should finish clearly on a Friday otherwise this will cause issues as the majority of pupils, families and staff take holidays as soon as possible in the summer.						
With Easter being so late the first half term is very short which impacts on solidly planned units of work being						

taught and interrupts the flow of learning. I feel it would be better to push the May half term break to the first week in June and lose a day of the holiday in compensation for a second bank holiday being in a teaching week. The first half term is too short compared with the very weighty length on the second half term in comparison. Children and staff is always impacted when terms go beyond 6 weeks.

Utterly pointless having a two day week in July- the pupils are exhausted, it is not a meaningful two days (21 and 22 Monday Tuesday July).

Utterly pointless to have two days of school in July, (21&22 July Mon and Tues), pupils are exhausted, meaningless days.

WHERE ARE THE DATES????????????????????

The half term is better off being the w/c 21 October just like in 2019. This would match neighbouring authorities such as Lincs and Cambridgeshire who have proposed the half term a week earlier.

Summer I feel should finish on a full week, a lot of activity weeks.